

Message Text

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17

ACTION NEA-13

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 SAM-01 IO-14 OMB-01 EB-11 EA-11 CPR-02 DRC-01

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R 082045Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9597

INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE NEW DELHI 2004

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, IN, BT

SUBJ: BHUTAN: SWARAN SINGH'S VISIT; FOREIGN RELATIONS;
CORONATION

1. ACCORDING TO A BHUTANESE MISSION OFFICER, FOREIGN MINISTER SWARAN SINGH VISITED BHUTAN FEBRUARY 4-6 FOR A GENERAL REVIEW OF INDO-BHUTANESE RELATIONS. A PRINCIPAL TOPIC WAS THE 300-MEGAWATT CHUKHHA HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT ON WHICH THE BHUTANESE WERE ANXIOUS TO MOVE AHEAD. SINCE BHUTAN WOULD USE ONLY ONE-FIFTH OF THE OUTPUT WITH THE REMAINDER AVAILABLE FOR ASSAM AND NORTH BENGAL, THE BHUTANESE HOPE THE INDIANS WILL BE FORTHCOMING ON THE RS. 70 CRORES COST. A BHUTANESE DELEGATION WILL FOLLOW UP IN DELHI NEXT MONTH.

2. IN AN INTERVIEW DURING SINGH'S VISIT WITH AN INDIAN WIRE SERVICE CORRESPONDENT, BHUTANESE FOREIGN MINISTER
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TSHERING REPORTEDLY SAID BHUTAN HAD NO PLANS WHATSOEVER

TO ESTABLISH DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH ANY COUNTRY OTHER THAN INDIA AND BANGLADESH "IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE". HE DESCRIBED BHYJAN'S RELATIONS WITH CHINA "AS JUST PROPER AND CORRECT." DELHI PRESS CAPTIONS CLAIMED "BHUTAN NOT KEEN ON TIES WITH OTHER NATIONS" AND "NO MORE FOREIGN TIES: BHUTAN".

3. COMMENT: THESE CAPTIONS MAY REFLECT INDIAN DESIRES, BUT BHUTANESE MISSION OFFICER TOLD US TSHERING'S REMARKS INDICATE NO NEW POLICY BUT SIMPLY EXISTING SITUATION WHERE ZKUTAN CANNOT EXPAND RELATIONS BECAUSE OF ITS MINISCULE FOREIGN SERVICE. THE BRITISH AND AUSTRALIANS HAVE RAISED WITH THE BHUTANESE THE POSSIBILITY OF HAVING THEIR AMBASSADORS IN DELHI ACCREDITED ALSO TO BHUTAN, BUT THE BHUTANESE SAID THEY WERE NOT YET READY FOR THIS STEP BECAUSE OF COST AND PERSONNEL LIMITATIONS AND THE FACT THEIR REPRESENTATIVE IN NEW DELHI COULD NOT RECIPROCATATE IN VISITING LONDON OR CANBERRA. DACCA IS THE ONLY OTHER CAPITAL TO WHICH THE BHUTANESE REPRESENTATIVE HERE IS ACCREDITED, HAVING PRESENTED CREDENTIALS IN APRIL 1973.

4. THE BHUTANESE MISSION OFFICER SAID THE CORONATION IS NOW PRETTY WELL SET FOR JUNE 2 (THUS CONFIRMING REPORT IN CALCUTTA'S 177). THE PRESSURE FOR INVITATIONS IS FIERCE, BUT THE BHUTANESE ARE HOLDING FIRM AT 300 GUESTS-- THE LIMIT THEY CAN ACCOMMODATE.
SCHNEIDER

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